

CRISIS NOTES

The Crisis As Failure

Actual crises ~~are~~ are attended with shocking surprises. This is a matter of fact, not definition. The head of state may yet it is not merely an incidental factor; the fact of surprise to the head of state may be essentially responsible for the situation being perceived by him as a crisis.

The head of state's surprise is not typically that of the public or of other parts of the government, nor is it necessarily what these others think it is for him, nor even what he tells them it is. It may be preceded by a great deal of relevant information about the general shape of events to come. It is even likely to be conditioned by much information that the public, or others than the Presidential group, do not share: which may, in the end, spare these others such surprise.

Not does the surprise even concern, always, the general shape of events, which may have been foreseen very well. It concerns at best matters of critical detail: points that make a great difference to the head of state's prior actions: his declarations, commitments, threats and promises; planning and preparation; information-gathering, tests, probes, reconnaissance, analysis. Events that cause intense regret — that would have led to different actions and far different outcomes if they had been assigned (a little? a lot?) more prob.

The crisis begins, then, with failure; the reality of failure, and a potential appearance of failure that may be even more acute.

There

The Sins and Failures

There are two common attitudes towards the effects of confronting the boss with failure:

1) One is (Thompson? JFK? Rust? Ball?)
(CIA?) Stevenson.

that this is perceived by law leaders as highly dangerous & provocative, that this in turn is ~~provocative~~ ~~for~~ dangerous for us; that K will feel great pressure to save face by action, by ~~so~~ confronting us with a corresponding failure or risk or humiliation, in face of internal forces (who may otherwise depose or limit or resist him) or external critics (Chinese groups),
or ^{or within} ~~or within~~ China.
Chance of violent _{or within} action is increased by surprise & failure.

This amounts to assuming that the implications of failure to laws are very simple to implications for a Western leader, and appears likely to be similar.

(e.g., apply to Centre; Nassau; Okinawa)

(debts . Acheson ? Ritz ? McCar ? I + R ?

② Other is that Sov leaders are likely to
retrench in the face of failure, to act
conservatively & cautiously, to cut losses, accept
& acknowledge mistake & defeat, avoid new
commitments or escalation while reconsidering
calculations that led to error & setback; accept
humiliation in short-run, hope & work to take
action — in withdrawal phase ^{& after} — that will reduce
and even reverse long-run losses. Chance of violent
action is reduced by failure & surprise.

This is to assume that the pressures produced by
failure are very different for Sovs than for US;
or at least, that Sov response to them is likely to
be very different.

These two attitudes — which amount to different theories of how crisis-behavior and what it takes to produce "crisis" for Jews, lead to different predictions of the impact of events and US actions on the Jews, and hence to different recommendations ^{US} on policy. They tend to separate the "hawks" from the "doves" (though that distinction could be based on quite other attitudes & beliefs).

Proponents point to different bodies of experience; each side seems more convinced than its own experience would warrant.